

METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR AUTOMATIC
NETWORK ADDRESS ASSIGNMENT

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

5 The present invention includes a method and apparatus for automatically
assigning a network address to a network device in an electronic communications
network carrying inter-device communication packets to and from electronic devices
located at assigned network addresses. The network device, also referred to as an
appliance, communicates with at least one other network device to collect information
10 from inter-device communication packets, which contain network address assignment
information. From the network address assignment information in the communication
packets, the appliance determines an available network address. The appliance
assumes the available network address. The appliance may access a remote network
device to retrieve an available, permanent, network configuration, including IP address.